



BUILD INDIANA COUNCIL

Infrastructure Media Summary

April 9, 2013

Mayor Greg Ballard: 'It's time to act' on Central Indiana mass transit bill

Indianapolis Star

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Indianapolis Mayor Greg Ballard says he's holding out hope the General Assembly will find a way to revive a long-discussed Central Indiana mass transit expansion that a Senate committee has stalled. The Tax and Fiscal Policy Committee voted 12-0 Tuesday to study the issue over the summer rather than approve a bill that would have put the transit plan before voters in a referendum. "I'd still like it to happen this year, there's no question about that," Ballard told The Indianapolis Star this morning during an interview in his office on the City-County Building's 25th floor. "I think '13 is a better year — the best year — to do it." A vote by the full Senate is likely next week on the stripped-down bill. There's a chance, however, that negotiations with the House, which already passed the full bill, could restore it. Otherwise, advocates would have to wait until next year's session to again seek legislation authorizing a referendum, after the summer study is done. If approved by voters in a referendum, the 10-year, \$1.3 billion transit expansion would double bus service in Marion County and add commuter routes to Hamilton County. Local income taxes would be increased by 0.3 percent. "It's time to act," Ballard said. "It just is, because you've got to see the future coming. You can either live in 1950 or you can live in 2050, take your pick. I choose to move toward 2050." He declined to speculate on what was behind the Senate's resistance to authorizing a referendum, other than to say, "There are people who think ... they're just going to get pummeled (by voters) for approving a tax increase." "But that's not what we're asking," Ballard added.

[Mayor Greg Ballard: 'It's time to act' on Central Indiana mass transit bill | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

Mass Transit Backer Says Measure Will Survive Summer

WIBC

4/4/13

The man leading the charge for Central Indiana mass transit says it still has a good chance for ultimate approval. Indy Connect Now Executive Director Ron Gifford says he believes the bill will move out of the Senate and the House and Senate will be able to work up a compromise. Gifford says the measure will definitely be in study committee this summer. Gifford says even given the current scenario, the measure will still be ready for a November 2014 referendum. Gifford says he has assurances from lawmakers that mass transit is a top issue that needs to be addressed. He says he doesn't believe the issue is being "swept under the rug." He says they need more time studying the overall issue. [Mass Transit Backer Says Measure Will Survive Summer | Indy's News Center - 93.1 WIBC Indianapolis - Live. Local. First.](#)

Senate ponders 1-year delay in Indy transit plan

Greenfield Daily Reporter

4/6/13

INDIANAPOLIS — A plan to expand mass transit in central Indiana faces a new roadblock after a Senate committee voted to delay the project at least a year, a move supported by a tea party group skeptical of the possible \$1.3 billion cost to taxpayers. The Senate Tax and Fiscal Policy Committee last week voted to further study a project that would double bus service in Indianapolis and add a rail line or bus service between downtown Indianapolis and Noblesville, about 20 miles north. The full Senate is expected to take up the proposal this coming week. Tea party group Americans for Prosperity have questioned whether the expansion would be worth the \$1.3 billion cost to taxpayers over the next decade. In February, the state House approved a bill that would allow 10 counties in central Indiana to hold a referendum letting voters decide. Supporters of plan, which they say would help attract young professionals to Indianapolis, argue that mass transit in cities has been studied for decades and there's no need to wait on the measure any longer. Should it be sent to a study committee this summer, it would be at least a year before the proposal is enacted. "(Mass transit has) been widely studied, (and) there will continue to be opportunities for input prior to a vote actually occurring by the voters," said Tim Maloney, senior policy director for the Hoosier Environmental Council. "We should keep that process moving forward through legislative authorization to do the local referendum." The sponsor of the bill, Rep. Jerry Torr, R-Carmel, said the Legislature shouldn't stand in the way of letting voters decide whether to upgrade long-overdue transit needs. [Senate ponders 1-year delay in Indy transit plan](#)

Steel key ingredient in restoring American infrastructure

NWI Times

4/7/13

The Report Card for America's Infrastructure issued last month by the American Society of Civil Engineers pointed out the gaping holes in our nation's infrastructure, as it has done for years. America's deteriorating roads alone are sucking \$101 million out of the economy in terms of wasted time and fuel, according to the Report Card. More than 200 million trips are taken daily across deficient bridges. The nation's drinking water delivery system is approaching the end of its useful life. That all averages out to an overall grade of D+ for infrastructure in the United States, according to the Report Card. That's bad news for the nation. The good news for Northwest Indiana is replacing all that failed infrastructure will take lots of steel. And that job starts with roads and bridges. "A roadway cross-section contains a tremendous amount of steel, with rebar and such," said Andrew Herrmann, president of the American Society of Civil Engineers. "And of course there are a lot of steel bridges in the country." Herrmann can list the steel needs of basically every other piece of infrastructure that needs rebuilding, including railroads, water treatment, dams, electric transmission and energy pipelines. A 1973 engineering graduate of Valparaiso University, he is intimately familiar with steel, spending most of his professional career doing bridge design and engineering. He points out that more ductile, that is, malleable, steels hold particular promise for rebuilding U.S. infrastructure. Those steels, the result of decades of research in the industry, can withstand a greater range of temperature, are less subject to fracturing and hold the potential of lengthening the lifespan of bridge and other projects. But the barriers to rebuilding America's roads, bridges and pipelines are not technical, Herrmann said. "It's just failing to invest in our infrastructure," Herrmann said. "That's the base root of our problem." [Steel key ingredient in restoring American infrastructure](#)

Bid to create new outer highway loop around Indy returns

Indianapolis Star

4/8/13

For opponents of the Indiana Commerce Connector, it's a bad idea that just won't go away. The

toll road bypass that would loop east and south of Indianapolis beyond I-465 was first proposed in 2006 by then-Gov. Mitch Daniels. He dropped the plan a few months later in the face of blistering public opposition. Keegan Poe, a Franklin resident and regional manager for the Indiana Farm Bureau in Johnson County, still remembers one packed meeting at the Indian Creek High School cafeteria in Trafalgar. One farmer after another expressed concerns about the plan taking away valuable farmland and disrupting their rural serenity. Another meeting at Indiana Downs in Shelbyville attracted about 1,500 people — so many that the state fire marshal had to turn away a couple hundred people. "I've still got a yard sign in my garage," Poe said. "Sounds like I'm gonna have to get it back out." That's because the controversial idea is once again getting some attention in the Indiana Senate, where some fiscal leaders see the highway project as an economic development tool. [Bid to create new outer highway loop around Indy returns | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

Key Ind. senator wants funding for toll road bypass of congested Indianapolis area

The Republic
4/8/13

INDIANAPOLIS — A key Indiana senator wants funding for a proposed toll road around Indianapolis' congested Interstate 465 bypass — a proposal that was dropped in 2007 amid strong public opposition. Sen. Luke Kenley, chairman of the Senate's budget-writing committee, wants some of the \$400 million Senate Republican leaders have included in their proposed budget for highway expansion projects to go toward the proposed Indiana Commerce Connector. That toll road would form a loop beyond I-465 that could link Muncie, Martinsville and Indianapolis International Airport. A Senate budget presentation estimated the cost would be \$1.52 billion. Kenley, R-Noblesville, said the proposed toll road would keep Indiana at the forefront of the transportation, logistics and warehousing industries once combined with completion of Interstate 69 and the expansion of interstates 70 and 65 to six lanes. "That has been one of our biggest growth industries," Kenley said. He said the bypass would also ease congestion in Hamilton County. The toll road is only one part of a much larger budget proposal lawmakers won't finalize until the end of this month as House and Senate negotiators work out their differences. But the House budget does not endorse the Commerce Connector. And Kenley's House counterpart, Rep. Tim Brown, R-Crawfordsville, said the project has not been part of the budget discussions in his chamber. Then-Gov. Mitch Daniels proposed the toll road concept in 2006, but dropped the plan months later in the face of strong public opposition. [Key Ind. senator wants funding for toll road bypass of congested Indianapolis area](#)

State Begins Workplace Driving Safety Initiative

Inside INdiana Business
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INDIANAPOLIS, Ind. - Motor vehicle crashes are one of the leading causes of death in the United States. According to the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute, more than 188,000 traffic collisions occurred statewide in 2011 resulting in occupant injury or property damage. Not only is transportation safety a key issue for Hoosier motorists, but Hoosier workers who work on Indiana streets, bridges and highways are also at risk for severe injuries and death. In 2011, transportation-related incidents were the leading cause of workplace fatalities in Indiana. During that time, more than 40 Hoosier workers were killed in incidents that occurred on or on the side of roadways. In an effort to reduce workplace transportation-related deaths, the Indiana Department of Labor has launched a statewide safety initiative to educate the public, the construction industry and the transportation industry about steps that can be taken to remain safe while on the road. "For Hoosier families, a transportation-related incident that takes the life of a loved one is a deep loss," IDOL Commissioner Sean M. Keefer said, "This very real loss drives the Indiana Department of Labor to seek improvements to better educate the public and enforce workplace safety in construction work zones." [State Begins Workplace Driving Safety Initiative - Newsroom -](#)

Dan Carpenter: New Indy bypass is old, bad idea revived while transit dies

Indianapolis Star

4/8/13

The vaunted fiscal conservatism of our state government certainly has its limits, and it never fails to take the exit ramp when it comes to highways. The latest sop to that fair-haired lobby, a new shot at a shot-down Indianapolis bypass, would seem to have little chance of becoming reality any time soon, given the exhaustion of the pavement budget. But the General Assembly will replenish that budget (along with lowering taxes?); and even if the tollway proposal fails to make the cut, it does provide a useful glimpse into the mentality of the legislature and governor, coming as it does in the wake of another stalling maneuver on Central Indiana mass transit. State Senate big shots have revived the spectacularly unpopular Indiana Commerce Connector, promoted and then dropped by then-Gov. Mitch Daniels in 2006. Pegged at more than \$1.5 billion in cost (before overruns), the project was seen by a broad cross-section of regional leaders and property owners as a huge potential loss of land without a showing of appreciable gain, as well as a diversion of precious funds from maintenance of existing infrastructure and from the area's crying need for modern public transportation. Kind of like the southern extension of I-69, for which the money has run out with major (and unpopular) legs still not built and new sections already falling apart. [Dan Carpenter: New Indy bypass is old, bad idea revived while transit dies | Indianapolis Star | indystar.com](#)

Sen. Hershman: Senate Approves Budget Amendment to Support Amtrak Services

Herald Journal

4/8/13

STATEHOUSE (April 8, 2013) — A budget amendment by State Sen. Brandt Hershman (R-Buck Creek) to increase transportation options for Hoosiers passed the Senate today. The amendment to House Bill 1001 allows the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) to reallocate some of its funds to Amtrak for the performance of services or purchase of equipment. This reallocation would be subject to review by the State Budget Committee and approval by the State Budget Agency. "For some time now, Amtrak's status in Indiana has been uncertain," Hershman said. "This is a resource that is both underutilized and underfunded. The amendment approved today will give INDOT the option of transferring some of its funds to boost support to Amtrak. Ultimately, the state can now decide whether this is a resource that fits Hoosiers' needs. I'm interested in exploring options to provide improved service for Hoosiers with a schedule that could encourage increased business and recreational travel through a partnership with Amtrak." The Senate passed the amendment today by a voice vote. It will be a part of HB 1001 as the bill continues through the legislative process. [Sen. Hershman: Senate Approves Budget Amendment to Support Amtrak Services - : Records](#)